Due to the small size of Sundown I.S.D., we have one Site Based Decision Making Committee for the entire district. It is called the District Wide Decision Making Committee (DWDMC). The committee addresses many issues, such as, the school calendar, complaints, and recommendations regarding the new school programs, development of the District Improvement Plan, and district staff development.

The committee is made up of the state required membership…teachers, principals, superintendant, athletic director, a school board member, parents, community members, business representative, two high school students, and one auxiliary staff member. The committee meets six to eight times a year, or on an as-needed basis.

The meetings are generally not overly structured. The group is a very cohesive group and most decisions are reached by consensus. As for conflict resolution…there has never been a need, as per the three representatives I spoke with. Emily King said, “We always come to agreement.” There has only been one complaint in the last several years. That complaint came from a parent this year. The issue was resolved by the committee with a minor addition made to a “school performance questionnaire” that is sent out to parents every year.

The information I received was basically what I understood about a site-based committee’s functions and responsibilities. The only thing that surprised me a little…no disagreements and very few complaints.

Campus improvement must begin with reliable data and data disaggregation. The annual A.E.I.S. report is not and should not be the only source for data. Relying only on this data, does not tell the whole story. Once data is broken down broken down and patterns can be determined, it is then possible for a school to create and implement an effective improvement plan that will serve a purpose and not just be another report. Once the plan is appropriately implemented, it can take a school to the level of continuous improvement.

Once the improvement plan is implemented, the next step is continual evaluations of the plan. There should never be complacency. No matter how good your scores are, there is always room for improvement. The continuous use of professional learning communities will help keep the fire going. An area of focus should be, keeping the students as well as the teachers motivated. A principal should regularly meet with the communities, and express his/her interest and involvement in seeing progress being made.